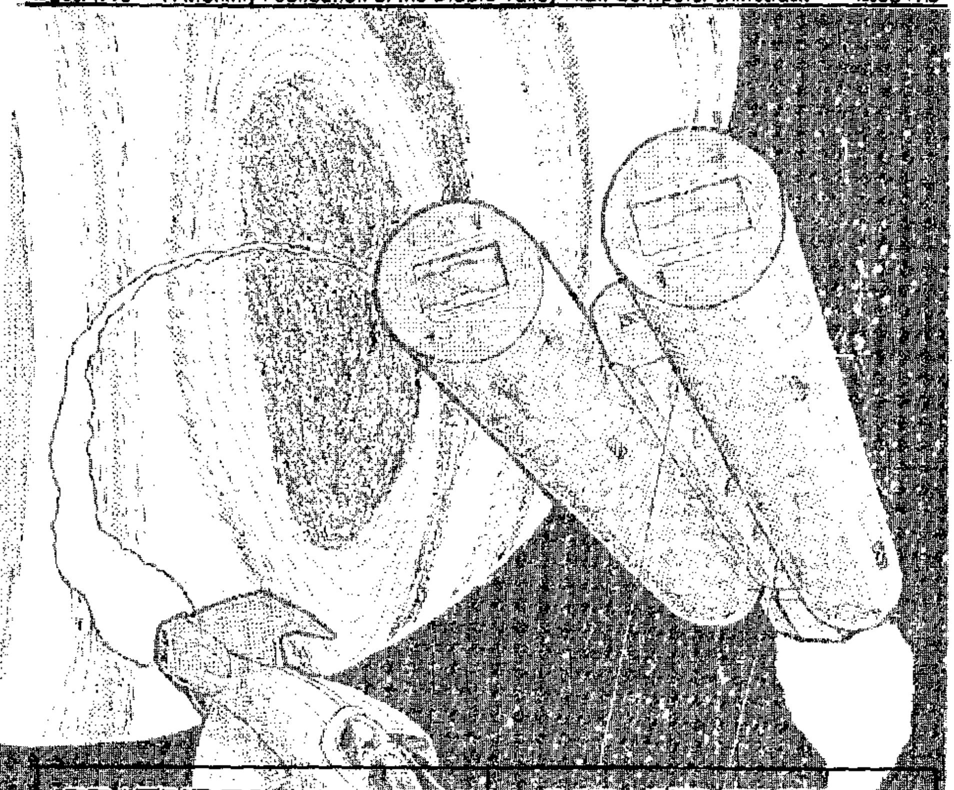
The DACE Desktop

An Information & Opinion Exchange Newsletter

August 1993 A Monthly Publication of the Diablo Valley Atari Computer Enthusiasts Issue IV.8



FEATURES

DEPARTMENTS

The Editor Speaks

So tell me. Did you miss me?

Hope so. I missed me too. Sorry about skipping out on the July newsletter folks. Had it in the works, then life came knocking on the door and I blew it. However, from what I hear from other editors of club newsletters, I'm not alone.

As the editor of our "monthly" publication I get to see and read the exchange letters from the other Atari clubs we communicate with. From time to time articles from these other publications make it into our very own hallowed pages.

None the less, their editors also tend to complain about the lack of article support or interest and the intrusion of reality on publication time. Several clubs have also decided to go a bi-monthly route to help hold costs down. Another universal truth amongst our brethren is that THE number one expense is the newsletter. With dwindling membership and shrinking bank accounts, cuts need to be made somewhere.

Hopefully, we are a ways off from such measures, but I do fear that we are heading down the same road. Perhaps Falcon sales and our own likability will bring new blood into our ranks and new money into our pockets.

Fear not though, this is not going to be a plea to spend more money at raffle time, or buy DOM's at the meetings. No, (although that would be a help.) It's also not going to be a request for articles from the general membership. Been there. Done that. I simply wish to state my opinion and let it be known, I'm not alone in this.

Some comfort, eh? Till next time...

The President's Page

by Daniel A. Galant

Welcome to the August edition of "Where Daniel Blabs". Gosh, didn't he just do that on the opposite page? Well, sort of, but that was as the editor. Now I get to do it again as your President.

Let me start off by mentioning that I won't be around for the September meeting. We're going on vacation. This also means I won't be around to get out the newsletter, so unless someone wants to step forward and get something out to the membership, I'll see you here in October.

Now down to business.

For quite some time now I have made it clear my distaste for the "IBM" type of computer. What I primarily disliked was DOS. So do a lot of other people. However, recently I was forced to work on my fathers new 486 machine in an effort to get him up and running with Windows and all that good stuff.

I must admit, it was a real pain to get it all working, and I spent many a long hour and dragged in some outside help to get it going, but when all was said and done...it was kinda nice.

It's hard for me to step back and take a real good, honest, look at the clone market and what it now has to offer. I've been an Atari supporter for years, and will continue to be one into the future. But the new 486s, Windows, and the multitude of applications and other software that you can find for those "other" machines is a bit much to ignore.

Looking around a software house you'll find house planners, computerized maps, geography lessons, Carmen San Diego, and GAMES. Anything and everything is there to be found and the games are running much more smoothly that they used to. I tried out X-Wing from Lucas...I LIKED IT!

So what's my point? Am I going to defect? Not hardly. I have a good deal of time and money invested in my Atari and know how to use it. But If I was going to buy another machine, I would have to seriously consider the clones. And don't think I havn't given it some thought.

Now if this revelation can happen to me, just imagine the first time computer buyer. No way is that person going to even glance in our direction. This isn't nay saying folks, just a reality check.

What's my solution? I don't have one. Neither, do I fear, does Atari. Until next we speak...beat on to that different drummer.

The Glendale Show Version 7.0

The Legend Continues

Press Release

The show will be held Saturday and Sunday, September 18-19, 1993 at the Glendale Civic Auditorium, 1041 N. Verdugo Road, Glendale, CA. Hours are 10:00 am to 6:00 pm on Saturday and 10:00 am to 4:00 pm on Sunday.

General Admission is $5.00 per person. If you plan on attending and you live outside of Southern California you may get FREE admission by sending a self-address-stamped-#10 envelop[illegible]g one) to H.A.C.K.S., 249 N. Brand Bl. #321, Glendale, CA 91203 and get two one day passes.

For those of you who will be needing lodging we have made arrangements with the New Red Lion Hotel in Glendale. Regular rates are $129.00 per night but if you mention ATARI/HACKS you will get a room for $79.00 per night, single or double occupancy. Reservations may be made by calling the Red Lion at 818-956-5466. The hotel has a free shuttle from the Burbank Airport. The guaranteed reservation cut-off date is August 28th. If you are quoted another rate ask for Janet Waldie in Sales.

Atari will be doing something very special in conjunction with this year's show. Look for more details soon.

Look for our full-page advertisement in upcoming issues of AtariUser magazine. If you have any questions send mail to H.A.C.K.S., 249 N. Brand Bl. #321, Glendale, CA 91203 or leave GEmail to John.King.T or call John King Tarpinian at 818-246-7276.

John King Tarpinian
Faire Chairperson
The Glendale Show



Atari's New 'Bird'

Reprinted from the Sacramento Total Atari Resource NewsDisk, July 1993

by Nick Langdon

Unassuming in it's 1040 ST style case, Atari's new Falcon 030 (pronounced Oh-Thirty) is quite impressive. From high end music and digital sound capabilites to high resolution color desktop publishing; the Falcon can do it all with the right software.

Shipped with several software packages, including Atari Works, Multi-TOS, D2D (Sound editing and manipulation software), Audio Fun Machine, System Audio Manager (SAM), Breakout and Landmines, the Falcon gives you a lot to do out of the box.

The video modes are a little overwhelming at first, especially for ST people who are used to only th[illegible] video modes available. The [illegible] supports all three ST modes, [illegible] low and medium, and several new resolutions. The Falcon video resolutions are not named as we are used to, and you have a couple options inside each of those.

There is a standard VGA mode (640x480x16 colors) and a 256 color version of that same resolution. You can double the lines on any resolution and there is a menu bar for specifically going into ST or TT compatibility modes. The machine also supports a true color mode that can display over 65,000 colors on screen at once. True Color works only on RGB (like the Atari 1224 and 1435) monitors or on a television.

The Falcon has a built in overscan, but the software must call the overscan, it can not be turned on at the stock desktop. Both the overscan and the true color modes will run on a multi-sync, which is the only kind of a monitor that will do all the Falcon resolutions; both in VGA and RGB. The trouble might lay in finding a multi-sync that will go low enough to show all the ST resolutions. Most new monitors do not go low enough, so you'll have to shop around to make sure you find one that will do all the resolutions.

At first glance the Falcon was scary and almost none of my existing software would run on the machine. Then of course I began to learn about which programs to run under TOS 4.0 and which to run under Multi-TOS. Above that it also depended on which resolution the computer was in before the software would run correctly.

Pagestream was not performing properly under either operating system until I realized that it was the 256 color mode causing the problem. I put the machine into standard

VGA (which is TT medium) and Pagestream ran fine. Touch-Up will run fine in VGA or ST high but the hand scanner will not scan. Migraph says they are working on an upgrade so hopefully it will not be long.

The bottom line to the resolution glut is to use the Falcon in VGA mode unless you need to go into the 256 color mode for something like True Paint. There is another reason for using the VGA mode; speed. The Falcon is greatly slowed down by the 256 color mode. So much so that Multi-TOS brings the machine to a crawl when in that resolution. Using the VGA mode you can achieve some degree of speed while still using an acceptable color resolution. In either case, Atari has limited the desktop icon colors to 16 so the desktop looks the same in 16 or 256 color VGA.

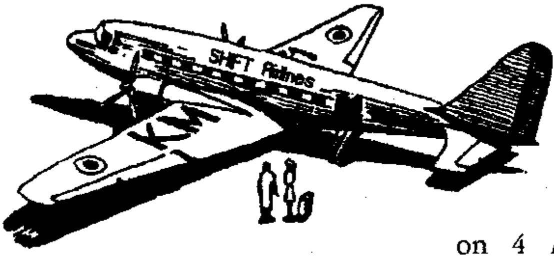
The Falcon is no quiet machine. Quite the contrary, if you have a good stereo system or a powerful boom box, you can shake your neighbors windows with little effort. The machine accepts any patch cable, ranging from a microphone to your CD player and allows you to sample just about anything on your stock Falcon.

Audio Fun Machine turns your Falcon into a CD player/enhancer, and can continue to process sound even while your running other programs. Connect your CD player to the machine and twist, distort, pitch up and down, and generally wreak havoc on your favorite artists recordings. Pipe your radio through the Falcon and make your own versions of the top 40.

Be warned that certain devices need to be attenuated (lessened in strength) before going into the Falcon. Standard Radio Shack parts do the trick and are a safe way to protect the chips in your machine. The rule of thumb is: If the device you are using has both a line out and an earphone jack, you may use the line out and not attenuate the line. If you are using any type of amplified or variable line then you need to use the attenuating adapters. They come in a two pack and are about $3, so it's not a big deal. Make sure you leave your windows open while blasting your speakers out so the neighbors can't sleep.

On the Falcon, the more memory you have the more you can enjoy the machine. The base models (one megabyte of RAM) are going to be very limited, as just about everything you do on the Falcon requires a hard drive or lots of memory. Fortunately, Multi-TOS allows you to limit how much memory each process takes, allowing such famous memory hogs as Pagestream and Flash to run properly, still leaving enough memory for your system.

All in all the Falcon is really a wondrous machine, I hope that Atari is really producing enough of them to make a difference. It would be nice to see a good market spring out the United States. Look forward to reading some great reviews soon on the first two Falcon games released; Ishar and Transarctica.



On the Run

by Ron Nabity

Reprinted from the
Sacramento Total Atari
Resource NewsDisk, July 1993

Most people would agree that the personal computer has revolutionized the way people write. Spiral notebooks have been replaced by active matrix displays; white-o[illegible]ly as a matte-finis[illegible]early, the computer enhances the power of the writer.

However, one limitation of writing on a computer is the physical location of the machine. For example, if your computer is located in the dining room, then you will need to write in the dining room. This may not always be convenient for you. Writing on the run would be so much easier if one could only find a "computerized spiral notebook."

Well, I may have stumbled across a great solution. It is not a new technology; in fact, it was developed prior to the introduction of the Atari 520ST. At a yard sale recently, I bought a Radio Shack Model 100 Portable Computer for $20. This little marvel features a full-size keyboard, 24K of RAM (expandable to 32K! grunt, grunt), an eight-line, 40-column display, and it operates on 4 AA batteries. Additionally, about 32K of built-in programs provide text-processing, BASIC language, and telecommunications. (Did I mention the internal 300 baud modem?)

With no disk drive, all documents and files are saved in memory, even after the computer is turned off. The most important feature of the Model 100 is a standard RS-232 port. Combined with a null-modem cable, this port allows easy file transfer to my ST. So, I can write anywhere (as I write this, I'm sitting on my couch, watching the Giants pound on the Braves). When I finish writing, I will port the document over to my ST for spell-checking and permanent storage.

The online services, such as GEnie, provide hundreds of programs for the Model 100; I recently downloaded a black-jack game and Space Invaders-type game. For faster telecommunications, I can plug a modem into the RS-232 port and run as high as 19,200 baud.

I don't see this laptop as a replacement machine, it just opens up some more possibilities in the computing arena. I now have the freedom to write where I want and when I want. By the way, it's the bottom of the seventh inning, and the Giants are leading 5-2.

Don't miss the August Bar-B-Que and Swim fest

Sunday August 22 we supply the drinks and you supply the food and fun. Our first Summer cookout spectacular is bound to be the hit of the season. Bring the family, the lotion, the salad or the chips but leave the computer at home.

For more info and details contact

Bob Coleman at

228-1756

and let him know what you're bringing.

What's Ahead?

by Daniel A. Galant

We have some interesting events coming in the months ahead that I think you'll want to be prepared for. So in order to help you out and perhaps wet the whistle a little bit, here are some of the events you have to look forward to.

To begin with we shall finally see the debut of the DACE Writers Contest at the August meeting. We have a few entries already so be sure to bring yours as well. There will be fun and prizes for all. Let's make this first effort a blast.



Also in August we will be holding the DACE cookout and swim fest. Come one, come all, and please bring the family. Let's get together for a purely fun and social day at Bob Coleman's house and Bar-B-Que, swim and generally get silly.

The cookout will be held August 22. DACE will be providing the drinks, (sodas and such, it IS a family affair after all.) You bring your own meat to cook and a dish, such as salad or chips, to share. It's been a hot summer around here, let's do a little cooling off together.

September will find us holding another fine software demo. We still don't know just what it will be, but we're looking at doing another MIDI demo. You seem to like those and if we can just convince Don's wife...

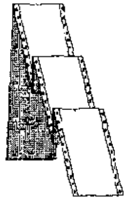
October brings us around to election time and that should most likely take about 10 minutes. the rest of the meeting will be the Animation and Art Contest. Come and see what your fellow Atarians are doing with their machines in the world of graphic entertainment. More DACE Marques are at stake here. There's still time to get in your entry.

That should bring us around to November where we might just have another DTP demo. There's an awful lot happening in the world of Desktop Publishing, even on the Atari platform. Keep in touch with this fascinating arena by attending.

Lastly, we come to the end of our 1993 schedule and the DACE Holiday Auction. This will be your chance to redeem all those Marques you've been earning throughout the year on some wonderful products. You've seen the list before and it will be printed again before the auction. Let's just say...it's imprssive.

So there you have it. Mark your calendars and plan to attend. You've had plenty of warning.

DACE Notes



by Daniel A. Galant

Back in July, Bob Coleman showed off a couple of the new games that were available for the Atari. The first was B-17, The Flying Fortress. A very nice simulation from the folks over at Microprose, B-17 offers you the chance to fully crew and fly one of the most magnificent bombers ever to take to the skies.

For not having had the game to long, Bob did a fine job in showing us the basics of what it could do. From picking your own plane and decal to flying missions and getting back home, Bob put B-17 through it's paces. Perhaps next time he'll even remember how to drop bombs.

The other game Bob brought to show us was the new release from the BitMap Brothers, The Chaos Engine. For this one bob brought an expert along, his son. Leave it to younger generation to figure these things out in nothing flat. With the pro at the controls we were able to see the first few levels of this scrolling arcade action shoot the monster fun time.

Nice graphics and mindless entertainment mark this game as another one for the afternoon off collection. Thanks Bob and son for taking the time to share it with us.

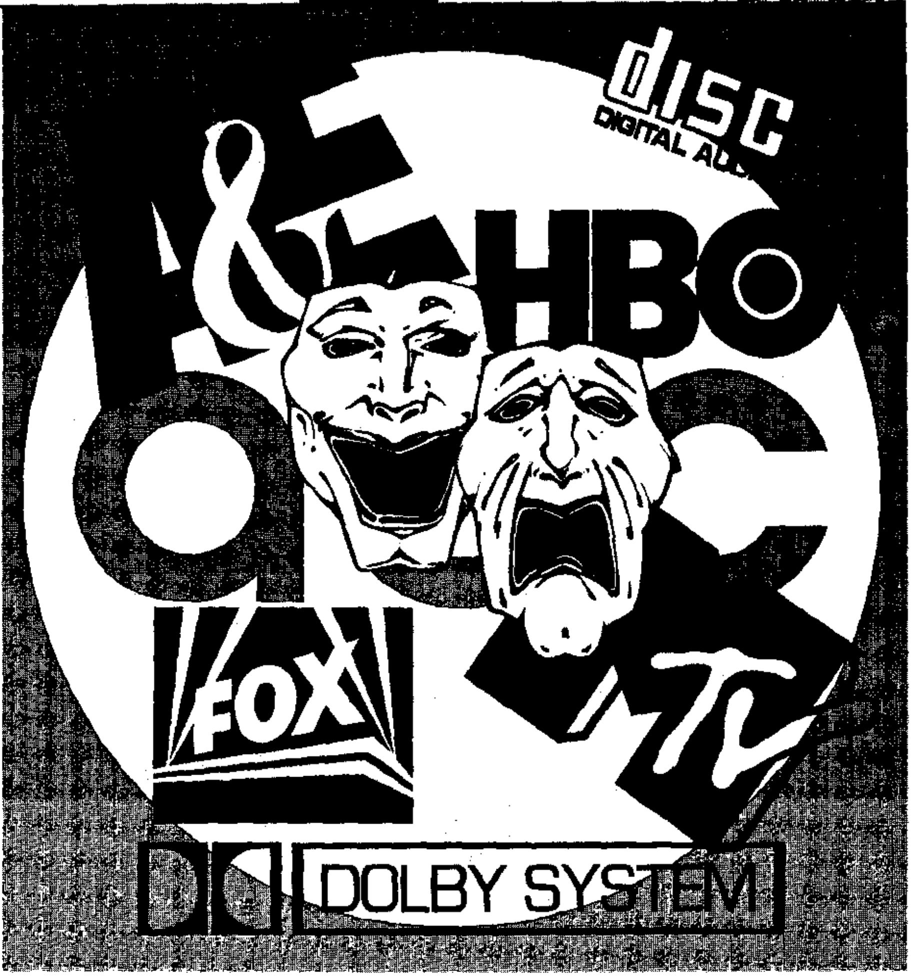
Since I wasn't taking notes during the meeting I have to admit I don't remember what we raffled or who took it home. Let us simply say, we had one and somebody won. I hope that our secretary, Jack, will return to us and once again take up the task of jotting this stuff down. I miss him.

If you would like to earn some DACE Marques in the future, offer to take notes at the meeting and hand them over to me before the newsletter goes out. This space is worth 10 marques for anyone with pencil and paper.



Thought for the Month

Why are boxing rings...square?



WARNING!

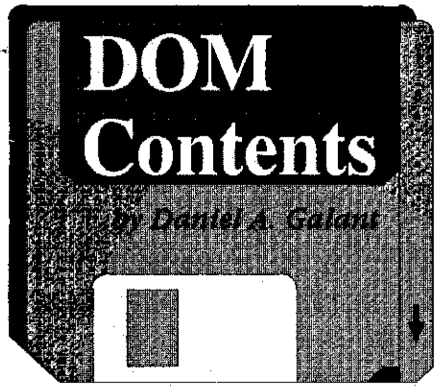
The DACE Writing Contest is now. August is just around the corner and the fun is about to unfold. For all you "pressure writers" now's the time. Don't miss out.

Whats NekST...?!

Good queSTion. August brings us to our much publicized Writer's Contest. All entries will be read and judged during the course of the evening, with a certain amount fun thrown in between. Anyone can enter and you can bring an entry with you that very night. Remember, it simply needs to have the word 'ATARI' in it somewhere.

The meeting itself will held once again at the Contra Costa Water District Bldg. 1331 Concord Ave. in Concord located between highways 680 and 242. The CCWD is right across the street from the Concord Acura and Saturn dealerships, so if you can't find us, perhaps you can find them. (Then just go across the street.)

I realize that summer is notoriously slow around the old meeting hall but it would be nice to see a decent turnout. Hope you'll be there, I will.



Let's make this one short and sweet. There will be no 8-bit DOM due to the fact that Larry simply can't find anything decent enough to put on one. Seems it's becoming slimmer and slimmer pickins out there for you 8-bit folks.

On the ST side of things, Larry came up with two disks. First off we have GEMview v2.38.

GEMview is quite probably the best picture file viewer available and it's shareware. We have the latest version for you and if you like it, please send in your shareware payment. Keep shareware alive. Pay if you play.

You saw it last month, now you can try it on for size. That's right. Just for you we've put Chaos Engine onto the Disk of the Month, (well, a demo of it at least.) Get hooked for a fraction of the cost, then go out and buy the real thing. After all, it's only a game.

The disk library is also available for you to look through, just ask.

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August 1993

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